

## ROBIN UTHAPPA, SHUBMAN GILL, SHIVAM MAVI, HEATH STREAK AND VENKY MYSORE OF KKR SHARED IT ALL AT CHAT WITH CHAMPIONS, PRESENTED BY THE TELEGRAPH



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— Robin Uthappa

(L-R) Robin Uthappa, Shivam Mavi and Shubman Gill at Chat with Champions presented by The Telegraph in association with The Newtown School. Pictures: B. Halder and Shuvo Roychoudhury



The Knights met up with the sporty kids of The Newtown School



(L-R) Venky Mysore, Satabdi Goswami Bhattacharjee, Robin Uthappa, Shivam Mavi, Shubman Gill, Sanjay Kumar Khemka and Sunil Agarwal at the event

### ROBIN UTHAPPA

#### Unforgettable moments with KKR:

First, I think, in 2014, the second time we won, we were in a situation where we had to win every game to qualify for the last stage of the tournament. And somehow as a unit we came together, really backed each other, supported each other, trusted each other, believed in one another and we ended up doing something so special that season. We ended up winning the tournament and that for me, I think, was the most memorable in KKR.

#### The evolution of KKR:

I think it has evolved beautifully. I have been here since 2014 and to see the team grow the way it has has been fantastic. Now I think we are in a stage where probably the average age of the team is 24 or 25, you know with all the youngsters that we have and all the senior players that we have had. It is a very young side and a side that will stay together for years to come. So we are in a very good place right now. I think credit must be given to the management and the think tank of KKR for being a little ahead of the curve and to some of the youngsters, and make sure that we have a consistent team to play for us over the next five or six years.

#### On having a sexy physique:

Well, I only really care about what my wife (Sheetal Goutham) has to say. (Laughs)



The auditorium, packed with the students of The Newtown School, erupted when the Knights walked in. "I LOVE you Shubman," squealed Suhani Kapoor (second from right). "He is cute, polite, tall and handsome! I'd like to tell him that I am a big fan and would like to meet him, get his autograph and a hug from him," said the Class VIII student.

### SHIVAM MAVI

#### Balancing studies and cricket:

It's very tough. Towards the beginning I would get to study only two or three months in a year. But now I don't even have that much time (chuckles).

### SHUBMAN GILL

#### The role of daddy dear:

Wherever I am today, for whatever reason, everything is because of my father. Because he was crazy about playing cricket and I got that craze from him. And he used to watch cricket a lot and I also used to watch with him. So whatever I am today is all because of him.

#### The role of a good foundation:

I think it is very important to have a good base when you are young. So if you have been working hard right from childhood, then going forward it's easier for you. But if you haven't been working hard right from the beginning, then it gets tougher later on. Like my father has made me work very hard right from the start, so now it's easy for me because if I go down from here then I will feel I am not doing enough.

#### Balancing studies and cricket:

It's not that I would bunk classes, but there was no pressure on me to get good marks. So, it was like you have to pass... but I did well.



#### Dancing with Shah Rukh Khan:

Obviously I felt very good to dance with him. So there was me, (Kamlesh) Nagarkoti, (Andre) Russell and Shah Rukh sir. His song was playing and he was teaching us the dance steps. The song was *Chammak challo!*

#KKR



KKR bowling coach Heath Streak (left) and CEO Venky Mysore at the adda moderated by Jimmy Tangree (inset)

## HEATH STREAK

### The Calcutta experience:

It is nice to be in Calcutta with all these brilliant fans who love us so much and to be amongst a great group of guys.

**Inside KKR:** I just have to be the bodyguard of these two young boys... I have to be their bodyguard because all these lovely girls keep coming up to them, so I have to keep them focused. I have to keep young Mavi bowling at a 140 and Shubman, I have to make sure, is focused on his batting. So, that's it, otherwise Robbie, even though he is the oldest guy (amongst them), is the one guy who has the six packs and he is always in the gym, training hard. So his wife's really lucky to have such a handsome guy!

**The hard work:** I think the important thing is to remind them of their plans, to make sure that even if someone hits you for fours and six, one good thing for a bowler is that you can bowl the next ball and you can get that person out.

Sometimes, it may not look like that. But we do, we really go into details about how we are going to get each batsman out. The big thing for these guys is dealing with pressure. At the end of the day, pressure is a mental thing. It is not a physical thing that you can touch or feel or see. It does not mean it is not real. It is just dealing with the pressure, being able to perform at that peak level, under those pressures and being able to focus on those skills that you need to at that time. And I think that's what the best players do.

We have seen Robbie doing it for many years in the IPL. He gets a good ball, but the next ball he hits out of the park for a six or a four. And that is what it is. And we are lucky we have got two brilliant under-19s who are above the age in terms of how they perform and I am looking forward to working with these guys, going forward in the future.

They are not just gonna be great KKR players but also future Indian stars.

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## VENKY MYSORE

### The "fabulous" journey called KKR:

This is what keeps us going, the kind of atmosphere created for KKR and the kind of support we get.

### The prankster of the team:

I must say it is a very well-behaved team. One of my complaints is that we are too quiet! Just go out and do the job... but I think

**Kuldeep (Yadav)** and **Chris Lynn** would probably fall in that category.

**The good boy of the team:** Well, the way he behaves at the moment, I feel **Shubman (Gill)** is the good boy of the team (*loud cheer*)! "Kaise ho Shubman?" "Thik hoon, sir"....

**The introvert of the team:** **Sunil Narine.** I had sent him a long WhatsApp message and the reply that I get is just a thumbs-up. (*Laughs*) So I tell him Sunny, type a little more... or a smiley face or something!

**The party person of KKR:** Who is the party person? Everyone wants to have a good time but a quiet time... but Robbie, who do you think is the party person?

**Robin:** By popular choice it sounds like **(Andre) Russell.**

**Venky:** Oh, Andre Russell! Yes, yes! How could I forget?! But I must tell you, in terms of partying... we played a game I think in (*pauses*) Chennai and Shah Rukh (Khan) came for that. Then I saw some videos posted the next morning and guess who was dancing away with him? The shy man Mr Gill!

**The foodie:** **Piyush (Chawla)**!

**The style icon:** I think **Robbie** is pretty stylish!

**Robin:** I wouldn't go and say I am a

style icon, sir... (*Blushes*)

**The girl magnet:** I don't know but **Shubman** is again coming up.... I think all the under-19 boys are targets these days! (*Laughs*)

### The rule-breaker: Andre Russell.

There are a set of rules only for Andre! (*Laughs*)

**The absolute obedient boy:** Is there such a boy? (*Laughs*)

**DK (captain Dinesh Karthik)**! I think he is the obedient boy. He listens and he does stuff.

**The early sleeper:** Early sleeper? That has to be **me** because I just show my face and I go away!

### The word that sums up KKR:

The word that comes to my mind is 'grounded'. It is a very grounded team, it's funny everyone has commented this year, particularly after the auction, that we have invested so much in the youth and there are so many youngsters and you are thinking about future.

And I remind everybody that apart from the youngsters that we have taken this year, for example a Kuldeep (Yadav) was coming off Under-19 World Cup win when we picked them and it's been a bit of a legacy of players who have done very well at a young age.... I mean you take a Robin who is right here! Robin made his debut for India. He was one of the most talented players coming out... I think 20-21... something like that.

You think about someone like Piyush Chawla, he is 29 now but he has been playing since he was 20 years I think! It's an amazing energy and the experience of seeing what the youngsters have already done, the youngsters we have in the team and the new youngsters coming in and their future. So for us, for me, the most satisfying thing to see... when they perform realising their potential, they are scratching the surface right now... lots in store.



## THEY ASKED, TEAM KKR ANSWERED!

### Shivanjini Parihar (Class IX) to Heath Streak:

What is your advice for aspiring players? **Streak:** If you want to play like these guys or you know you want to be an engineer, whatever it is, make sure that's your real dream because that's why you are going to be good at it. If you have passion for something, that's how you are going to succeed.

**What Shivanjini told t2:** I love the way the KKR team plays. For me, they are the best side in the tournament. My favourite player is Dinesh Karthik and I want to wish KKR all the best for the play-offs!



### Tanish Mehta (Class IX) to Shubman Gill:

What do you tell yourself when you walk on to the field?

**Shubman:** I think it is just about being myself, being able to express myself when I am batting and I just tell myself, go out there and have fun! That's it.

**What Tanish told t2:** KKR is in a much better form than last year. My favourite is Robin Uthappa because of his batting and his spirit. My only message for KKR is, 'Please win!'



### Anirudha Duttgupta (Class IX) to Robin Uthappa:

What is the best locker room advice you have been given?

**Robin:** When we get to the locker room, we don't really get advice as such... maybe just pointers. I think it is more about really supporting your mates at that point of time. That's what we really want in a successful team and work environment.

**What Anirudha told t2:** The KKR team is awesome. They play as well as they talk. It was wonderful seeing the players from up close. I am a big fan. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me. My favourite player is Andre Russell. I love his hair... not to mention his style of batting.



### Samridhhi Singh (Class IX) to Shivam Mavi:

What is the one thing that you want to change in yourself?

**Shivam:** Not blaming others for my mistakes and figuring them out and focusing on that.

**What Samridhhi told t2:** I follow the IPL regularly. RCB is my favourite team but I do follow KKR. It was a good experience seeing the players. We found that they were really down to earth. Shivam Mavi told me he wanted to make changes in himself. This showed that they are like common people too, they work on themselves. My favourite KKR player is Dinesh Karthik. I wish them all the best and pray that they play well, play fair and win the IPL.



### Shubham Singh (Class IX) to Venky Mysore:

What is the best way according to you to take criticism?

**Venky:** Well, I think criticism is as important as praise because that's what I think helps you to understand how to improve, because everybody is only heaping praise on you... I mean all of us have scope for improvement, call it criticism or constructive feedback. I think it is very important that we are open to it.

**What Shubham told t2:** Kolkata Knight Riders don't usually give up and they don't let failure affect them. My favourites are Russell, Robbie and Dinesh Karthik. They hit the ball really well and I love that. I couldn't believe that I saw them from such close quarters!



"It is always nice to see the young budding stars live before their eyes and to know their struggles and hard work that they have put in. By getting the stars, we want the kids to know that there are no shortcuts but at the same time they are achievable. We have multidisciplinary sports and specialised coaches. I feel sports is an integral part because when a child is focused on a sport, has interest or practises a sport, there is little time for the child to deviate," said **Satabdi Goswami Bhattacharjee**, principal, The Newtown School.

"This was an amazing experience... hosting the team. The students were all really excited. There were a lot of requests for Shubman Gill!" said **Sunil Agarwal**, founder director, The Newtown School.

"It was great hosting the team. All of us enjoyed a lot. We focus on the all-round development of a child. We are expanding our sporting infrastructure," said **Sanjay Kumar Khemka**, founder director, The Newtown School.

Text: Sulogna Ghosh and Pramita Ghosh